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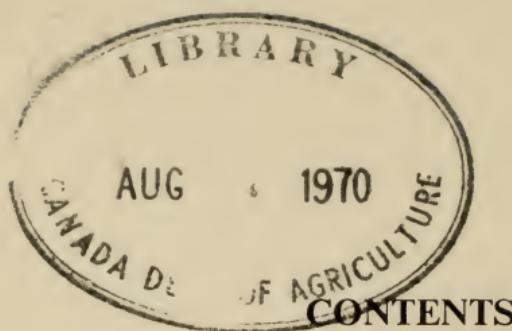
# BUY BY GRADE

consumer guide to  
food grades

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## **BUY BY GRADE**

Many food products sold in Canadian retail stores are graded on the basis of quality according to standards established by federal and provincial legislation. The grade mark appears on the container or product. The word "CANADA" in a grade name means that the product has been graded according to federal standards which are enforced by Canada Department of Agriculture inspectors.

Grades apply to butter, cheddar cheese, skim milk powder, meat, poultry, eggs, fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, honey and maple syrup.

This booklet explains the meaning of federal grades and tells to what extent graded foods are available.

**Look for the Grade Mark**

**Symbol of Quality**

## DAIRY PRODUCTS

### Butter

All creamery butter sold in Canada is graded. The grade mark must be shown on the main panel of the wrapper and carton in which the butter is sold. Cut and wrapped creamery butter must be sold in net weights of  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound, 1 pound or multiples of 1 pound.

No fat other than butterfat may be used in the manufacture of butter. The only additives permitted are salt and approved food color.

### GRADES

Flavor, color and texture determine the grade. Usually only Canada First Grade butter is available in retail stores.

**CANADA FIRST GRADE**—Highest quality. Excellent flavor, well made, smooth, waxy texture, uniform in color.

**CANADA SECOND GRADE**—Slightly lower in quality and is generally used for cooking.

**CANADA THIRD GRADE and BELOW CANADA THIRD GRADE**—Rarely found on the retail market.

### Cheese

Grade names for cheddar cheese are the same as for butter. Practically all cheddar cheese sold is Canada First Grade quality but it is not usually marked as such in retail stores. Grades differ in flavor, texture and color.

Packages of cheddar cheese are labeled according to age—"old," "medium" or "mild"—and show the net weight.

## Skim Milk Powder

All packaged skim milk powder sold in retail stores is Canada First Grade. The powder must meet definite standards of solubility, and of fat, moisture and bacterial content.

Skim milk powder is packed in packages of 1 pound net weight or multiples of 1 pound, for example, 3 and 8 pounds. When reconstituted, 1 pound skim milk powder makes 4 quarts skim milk.

## BEEF, VEAL, LAMB AND PORK

Before fresh meat is graded it must have passed health inspection. Health inspection is also mandatory for all meat for interprovincial, foreign or import trade, and for meat used in making sausages, wieners and other prepared or canned meats.

A round "Canada Approved" or "Canada" inspection stamp is applied to all carcasses after they have been health inspected by federal government veterinarians. This stamp—not to be mistaken for a grade mark—is the consumer's assurance that meat is wholesome and has been dressed under sanitary conditions. Edible dyes are used for stamps and grade marks.

Grades on fresh meats are not always evident to the consumer in retail stores.

### Beef

Most beef from packing plants under federal health inspection is graded by a government grader. A ribbon brand indicating grade may then be applied by the packer. The ribbon brand is printed in red for Canada Choice, blue for Canada Good, brown for Canada Standard and black for

Canada Commercial and Canada Utility. The brand runs the full length of the side of beef so that a section of the marking should appear on each retail cut. Meat packers can include their trade name alternating with the grade in the ribbon brand.

## **GRADES**

Canada Choice and Canada Good are the grades most generally available. Canada Standard, Canada Commercial (1) and Canada Utility (2) are available to a limited extent.

**CANADA CHOICE (RED BRAND)**—From young steers and heifers with a high proportion of meat to bone. Has a good covering of fat, and light tracings of fat in the lean (called "marbling").

**CANADA GOOD (BLUE BRAND)**—From young steers and heifers. Has a slightly lower proportion of meat to bone and usually less fat than Canada Choice.

**CANADA STANDARD (BROWN BRAND)**—From young steers and heifers. Has a lower proportion of fat to lean meat than Canada Good.

**CANADA COMMERCIAL (BLACK BRAND)**—Class 1: From young steers and heifers less fleshy than Canada Standard but having maturity and fat covering similar to Canada Choice. Class 2: From young cows and heifers older than those for Class 1 but with the same maximum fat covering. Class 3: From steers, heifers and young cows of same maturity as those for Class 2 but overfat and wasty.

**CANADA UTILITY (BLACK BRAND)**—Class 1: From steers, heifers and young cows of poor quality with a slight fat covering. Class 2: From mature cows and oxen of medium or better con-

formation and quality with a moderate fat covering.  
Class 3: Quality and finish are lower than Class 2.

## **Veal, Lamb and Pork**

Grade standards are established for veal and lamb, and the carcasses can be grade-stamped for consumer acceptance. Pork carcasses are graded for producer payment only.

## **POULTRY**

Poultry must be graded for sale in retail stores in most major cities in Canada, as well as for interprovincial and export trade. Imported dressed and eviscerated poultry must conform to Canadian grade standards although the word "Canada" does not appear in the grade mark.

### **GRADES**

Grade names are the same for chickens, capons, fowl, turkeys, ducks and geese. The grade mark is printed on a metal breast tag, transparent bag or label insert. A different color designates each grade. Turkeys, ducks and geese must also be marked as "young" or "mature."

**CANADA GRADE SPECIAL (PURPLE)**—Near-perfect specimens, the finest quality produced.

**CANADA GRADE A (RED)**—The quality most commonly available on the retail market. Formed normally and well fattened and fleshed. May have a slightly crooked keel bone, minor discolorations, and a few pinfeathers and short tears in the skin. Chickens have fat showing over breast and thighs. Broiler turkeys, or young turkeys weighing less than 10 pounds (eviscerated weight), have a moderate covering of fat over breast, thighs and

back; turkeys weighing more than this have breast and thighs reasonably well covered with fat and a moderate covering of fat over the back; less fat is required on birds over 16 pounds. Fowl, ducks and geese have breast, thighs and back reasonably well covered with fat.

**CANADA GRADE B (BLUE)**—Formed normally but may have a slightly crooked keel bone. Not as well fleshed and fattened as Canada Grade A birds. A few short skin tears, minor discolorations and pinfeathers that do not seriously detract from the appearance of the bird are allowed.

**CANADA GRADE UTILITY (BLUE)**—Must at least qualify for Canada Grade B, but one or more parts of the bird may be missing.

**CANADA GRADE C (YELLOW)**—Fairly well fleshed. May have large skin tears, pinfeathers and prominent discolorations.

## HEALTH INSPECTION

A “Canada Approved” or “Canada” health inspection stamp appears only on poultry that is slaughtered and eviscerated in federally inspected plants. Inspection is compulsory only when poultry moves interprovincially or is imported or exported.

## EGGS

Eggs are sold by grade in all provinces. Grade marks (including sizes for Canada Grades A1 and A eggs) must be shown on cartons and bulk displays of eggs in retail stores.

## GRADES

All grades must be free from discolored yolks and blood spots. Canada Grade A is the grade most usually available in retail stores.

**CANADA GRADE A1**—Eggs are clean, normal in shape, with sound shells and finest interior quality. Yolks are round and compact, and surrounded by very thick dense albumen. Cold-storage eggs are not permitted in this grade.

**CANADA GRADE A**—Eggs are practically clean, practically normal in shape, with sound shells. Yolks are fairly well rounded and surrounded by thick albumen.

### **Sizes for Grades A1 and A**

*Extra Large Size*—Each egg weighs at least  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ounces.

*Large Size*—Each egg weighs at least 2 ounces.

*Medium Size*—Each egg weighs at least  $1\frac{3}{4}$  ounces but less than 2 ounces.

*Small Size*—Each egg weighs at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces but less than  $1\frac{3}{4}$  ounces.

*Peewee Size (Canada Grade A only)*—Each egg weighs less than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces.

**CANADA GRADE B**—Eggs are reasonably clean, slightly abnormal in shape, with sound shells. Yolks are moderately oblong, slightly flattened and enlarged, and surrounded by albumen less firm than in Canada Grade A. Each egg weighs at least  $1\frac{3}{4}$  ounces. (For poaching and frying, Grades A1 and A eggs are usually more satisfactory than Grade B.)

**CANADA GRADE C** and **CANADA GRADE CRACKS**—Used mainly for commercial frozen-egg products. Sizes are not specified.

## **FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

Most Canadian fresh fruits and vegetables grown in commercial quantities are sold by grade

and marked with a "Canada" grade name. Not all provinces require grading of the same fruits and vegetables though all have regulations covering some. Provincial grades are similar to federal grades.

Fruits and vegetables in packages bearing a "Canada" grade name must be in containers standardized as to size or weight. Besides a grade name, other information must be shown: name and address of packer, variety (apples and pears), number in box or carton (apples, peaches and pears), net weight, and size range in the case of certain vegetables.

Bulk displays of apples in retail stores must also indicate the variety when a grade is marked.

In general, fresh fruits and vegetables are graded according to uniformity of size and shape, color, maturity, cleanliness and freedom from disease and other injury.

## **GRADES (FRESH FRUITS)**

### **APPLES**

*Canada Extra Fancy*

*Canada Fancy*

*Canada Commercial, Canada Cee or Canada "C"*

Apples must have a minimum diameter of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches to meet federal grade standards. In some provinces, apples in the size range of 2 to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches may be sold if they have Extra Fancy color.

**APRICOTS, CRABAPPLES, CRANBERRIES,  
GRAPES, PEACHES, PLUMS, PRUNES,  
RHUBARB**

*Canada No. 1*

*Canada Domestic*

## BLUEBERRIES, CANTALOUPE, STRAW-BERRIES

*Canada No. 1*

## CHERRIES

*Canada No. 1*

*Canada Domestic*

*Canada Orchard Run*

## PEARS

*Canada Extra Fancy*

*Canada Fancy or Canada No. 1*

*Canada Commercial, Canada Cee, Canada "C" or*

*Canada Domestic*

## GRADES (FRESH VEGETABLES)

ASPARAGUS, BEETS, BRUSSELS SPROUTS,  
CABBAGE, CAULIFLOWER, CUCUMBERS,  
HEAD LETTUCE, NEW POTATOES,  
TOMATOES

*Canada No. 1*

*Canada No. 2*

## CARROTS, PARSNIPS

*Canada No. 1, and Canada No. 1 Cut Crowns*

*Canada No. 2*

## CELERY

*Canada No. 1, and Canada No. 1 Heart*

*Canada No. 2*

## ONIONS

*Canada No. 1, and Canada No. 1 Pickling*

*Canada No. 2*

## POTATOES

*Canada No. 1, and Canada No. 1 Large*

*Canada No. 2*

Sizes of potatoes are specified as follows:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Diameter in inches</i>
Canada No. 1	
--round varieties	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
--long varieties	2 to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
—new potatoes until Sept. 16 each year (both round and long varieties)	1 $\frac{7}{8}$ to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Canada No. 1 Large	3 to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Canada No. 2 (75% must have at least 2-inch diameter)	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
<b>RUTABAGAS, SWEET CORN</b>	
<i>Canada No. 1</i>	

## PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Most processed fruits and vegetables are sold by grade in Canada and about 95 percent are packed in plants registered by the federal government.

Imported canned, frozen or dehydrated fruits or vegetables must meet the federal grade standards if grades are established for the product. They cannot carry the word "Canada" as part of their grade name when sold in original containers. The country of origin must be named on labels.

Grade marks must be shown on the main part of labels. The volume of each can, in fluid ounces, must also be shown.

Some canned vegetables such as peas or beans may be graded and marked as to size, or marked "assorted sizes" or "mixed sizes" if ungraded as to size.

The sugar added to canned or frozen fruit must be declared on the label as percentage of syrup or as dry sugar. When fruits or juices are packed

without sugar, the words "Without Sugar" or "Unsweetened" must appear on labels.

Jams, jellies, pickles and similar processed fruits and vegetable products are not graded but standards to specify what these may contain have been established by the federal Department of Agriculture.

## Canned Fruits and Vegetables

Canned fruits and vegetables are packed in containers standardized to contain 10, 14, 19, 28, 48 and 100 fluid ounces. Special sizes are allowed for asparagus, whole-kernel and vacuum-packed corn, fruit and vegetable juices, baby foods and tomato paste.

### GRADES

**CANADA FANCY**—Highest grade, as nearly perfect as possible. Packed from sound, clean fruit or vegetables at perfect maturity. Free from blemishes, of good color and uniform in size. Clear liquid. Suitable for use where uniformity of size and color is important.

**CANADA CHOICE**—Slight variation in size, color and maturity allowed, but must be packed from fruit or vegetables which are sound, clean and free from blemishes. Fairly clear liquid. Suitable for use where flavor and tenderness are desired but perfect uniformity in size and color is not important.

**CANADA STANDARD**—Prepared from good quality products not necessarily of uniform size. For use where appearance is not the most important consideration. Fruit of this grade is good for puddings, gelatin desserts or frozen dishes; vegetables are good for soups or scalloped dishes.

**SUB-STANDARD**—A low quality product packed from clean, sound fruit and vegetables which need not be uniform in maturity, color or size. This grade is not regularly found in retail stores.

## Fruit and Vegetable Juices

Fruit or vegetable "juice" must consist of fruit or vegetable juice only. The addition of salt or sugar must be declared on the label.

### GRADES FOR TOMATO JUICE

**CANADA FANCY**—Flavor of well-ripened tomatoes. Good color and consistency. Free from particles of skin, seeds and minute pieces of core.

**CANADA CHOICE**—Flavor of well-ripened tomatoes. Somewhat lighter in color than Canada Fancy juice and of fairly good consistency. Reasonably free from particles of skin, seeds and minute pieces of core.

### GRADES FOR APPLE JUICE

**CANADA FANCY**—Good flavor and characteristic color.

**CANADA CHOICE**—Reasonably good flavor and color.

When apple juice is vitaminized, it must contain not less than 35 mg. of ascorbic acid per 100 cc. (about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  oz.) of juice at any time within 12 months of being packed.

## Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

### GRADES

**CANADA FANCY**—Highest grade, as nearly perfect as possible.

**CANADA CHOICE**—Good flavor. Not as perfect in appearance as Canada Fancy product; color, size and maturity are less uniform.

## **Dehydrated Fruits and Vegetables**

Standards are established for maximum allowable moisture content and bacteria count.

### **GRADES**

**CANADA FANCY**

**CANADA CHOICE**

## **HONEY**

Honey is sold in comb, granulated (or creamed) and liquid form. Comb honey is not graded. If honey that will remain liquid is desired, look for the word "Liquid" on the label or lid.

Honey in retail containers must be graded and classified as to color in most provinces and when shipped from one province to another.

Honey labeled "Pasteurized" keeps indefinitely as it has been heat-treated to destroy yeasts that cause fermentation. It is usually sold in the creamed form but some pasteurized liquid honey is available.

### **COLOR CLASSES**

Color does not affect grade but is an indication of flavor; usually the darker the honey, the stronger the flavor. There are four classes: White, Golden, Amber and Dark.

### **GRADES**

Usually the only graded honey available in retail stores is Canada No. 1.

**CANADA NO. 1**—Good flavor. Free from foreign material. Has good keeping quality. Best grade for table use.

**CANADA NO. 2**—Good flavor. May have traces of pollen or wax. Keeping quality not necessarily as good as for Canada No. 1.

**CANADA NO. 3**—May not have as good flavor as higher grades and may not keep as well. May show some pollen or wax particles.

Honey that is wholesome but fails to meet Canada No. 3 requirements is marked "Sub Standard."

## MAPLE SYRUP

The sale of maple syrup by grade is not compulsory in Canada except in the province of Quebec. Federal government legislation prohibits adulteration of maple products. The label must be marked "Maple Syrup" if it is a pure maple product, and must carry the name and address of the packer.\* The container must be marked with the net weight. Maple syrup must weigh at least 13 lb. 2 oz. per gallon.

When pure maple syrup is sold by grade it must meet the requirements for composition and labeling and the grade mark must be shown on the label.

## GRADES

**CANADA FANCY**—Very light amber. Delicate flavor. No trace of fermentation.

**CANADA LIGHT**—Light amber. Stronger flavor than Canada Fancy. No trace of fermentation.

**CANADA MEDIUM**—Dark amber. Stronger flavor

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\* The label on artificial maple products must be marked "artificially maple flavored," and must name the ingredients, the manufacturer, and his address.

than Canada Light. No trace of fermentation.

**CANADA DARK**—Dark. May have a trace of fermentation.

Quebec has an additional grade, "Amber C," between Canada Medium and Canada Dark.

*Inspection of graded foods is carefully carried out by inspectors of federal and provincial departments of agriculture. If a consumer buys food that appears to be below the grade designated, the product can be returned to the person from whom it was bought, or, in larger cities, the complaint can be reported to a Department of Agriculture inspector.*

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